



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Beirut, Lebanon

November 4, 1969

969-11-4, Atassi, US, Arms

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL
CONFIDENTIAL

Bryan H. Baas
Department of State
NEA/ARN
Washington, D.C. 20520

Handwritten notes:
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Dear Bryan:

On November 3 my old friend Mahmud El Youssef, who is Tapline manager in Damascus, in addition to being RCA agent showed me a letter dated October 20 from a Mr. M.C. Neri of the Defense Division of RCA quoting on 1,000 AN-PRC77's for the Syrian Army. The price of \$2,000 per unit made the total order \$2,000,000. The quotation included a "force majeure" clause which included the need for U.S. Government license or a U.S. Government export license.

In brief, the Syrian Army is still interested in obtaining these sets. In response to Mahmud's question about the possibility of obtaining a license, I pointed out that the continued detention of the two Israelis in Syria, together with the current Middle East conditions (the cease-fire had become effective only nine hours earlier), I doubted very much whether an export license would be approved. Mahmud's reaction on the Israelis was to the effect that no release was possible until the two Syrian pilots were let go. This of course is nothing new but I found it an interesting reaction from a conservative, highly pro-western Syrian. While I will be covering separately his analysis of the Syrian side of the recent episode, he did point out that the continued "harsh" U.S. attitude would be difficult to explain to "the younger officers."

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I did, however, agree in view of his pressing interest in this subject, to take another reading on this old question with Washington although I did not hold out much hope of an affirmative answer.

The present moment is certainly not the time to seek a reversal of our long standing position but were it possible in the near future to take another look at this question, it would be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



Norman K. Pratt
First Secretary of Embassy

P.S. A copy of my Memorandum of Conversation with Mahmud is attached.

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